DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Simms DATE 3-17-8
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED
EXCISE
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Your letter to the Deputy Secretary concerning the recent tragedy in Guyana has been referred to me for reply.

The tragedy of Jonestown has no parallel. On Sunday, November 19, the U.S. Government faced a crisis situation in Guyana. A U.S. Congressman and others in his party had been killed. A settlement believed to include about 1,000 Americans was involved, and its situation was uncertain. It was apparent that the limited transportation and other resources of the Government of Guyana might be insufficient to cope with these events in an isolated area 120 miles from the capital. Medical evacuation for the injured Americans by U.S. military aircraft was immediately authorized, and the U.S. Government offered assistance to the Government of Guyana to prevent further loss of life.

The Guyanese indicated they needed helicopter lift and other support. As events progressed, it became evident that many Americans were dead. For a time, it was believed that there might be many survivors in the jungle, and the United States adjusted and increased its assistance to help the search by Guyana police and military. Finally, when the number of dead was clear, the operational requirements were to continue support of the extensive ongoing investigation of serious crimes and to identify, treat with dignity, and remove the bodies as quickly as possible to a facility that could deal with this immense problem. Extensive mortuary facilities were essential in the process of identification and investigation. Only the U.S. military had the equipment and facilities to handle this enormous problem. The removal of the bodies from Guyana was at the specific request of the Government of Guyana.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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The President, acting under his constitutional authority as Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, ordered the departments of our government to take action to deal with this emergency. The operational decisions within the U.S. Government in this unique situation were made by the Secretary of State in conjunction with other members of the Cabinet.

The Federal Government does not ordinarily pay to bring back the remains of Americans who die abroad. That is a responsibility of their families. If no next of kin can be found, the country where the death occurred is responsible for burial. It was evident, however, that it was beyond the ability of individual families or of the facilities available in Guyana to resolve the unprecedented problems that characterized this situation. In fact, it was not even clear who the next of kin were without identification being established. The families of those who died at Jonestown are, of course, expected to bear the responsibility for the disposition of the remains in the United States.

The costs to the Government of an effort of this magnitude obviously are considerable although substantially less than the $8 million figure used in some press reports. It will be some time before the total is known. The Office of Management and Budget, together with other agencies, is reviewing the financial aspects.

The Department of Justice is fully exploring possible legal remedies which can be used to recover the cost the U.S. Government has incurred in removing and processing the bodies of Americans from Guyana. It will be some time before the results of these efforts are known, but you may be assured that we will continue to make every effort to keep the costs to the U.S. Government to the minimum necessary.

Sincerely,

Hodding Carter III
Assistant Secretary
for Public Affairs and
Department Spokesman

PA/PC/CM:DCornelius/mb
X24933 12-21-78
PA-Shapiro

S/S# 7823265

LPC: ARA 12/78

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

Revision #1

ACTION SLIP

UNCL
(Attachment Classification)

S/S CONTROL NUMBER 7823265

ACTION ASSIGNED TO: PA/CM
(Action Office Instructions on Reverse)

DATE 12/12/78

ACTION REQUESTED

___ STATE TO NSC MEMO
___ STATE TO

___ with Draft reply for signature by _____
___ with Comment or Recommendation

✓ DIRECT REPLY on behalf of D
___ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE BY _____

___ provide info copy under cover of State-NSC transmittal form
✓ provide comeback copy for D S/S-I

___ RECOMMENDATION FOR _____
___ with Memorandum for the President

___ APPROPRIATE HANDLING

___ FOR YOUR INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DUE IN S/S BY: 12/26/78
CLEAR WITH: —

REMARKS/SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

___ S	___ UNA	___ A	___ SCA	
X D	___ S/AB	___ CU	___ AF	
___ P	___ S/AR	___ EB	___ ARA	
___ E	___ S/MS	___ H	___ EA	
___ T	___ S/P	___ IGA	___ EUR	
___ M	___ S/PRS	___ INR	___ NEA	
___ C	___ S/CPR	___ IO	___ ACDA	
___ S/S	___ S/IG	___ L	___ AID	
___ S/S-O	___ S/IL	___ OES	___	
___ S/S-EX	___ S/NM	___ PA	___	
___ S/S-S	___ D/HA	___ PM	___	
___ TEAM A	___ D/IWY			
X TEAM B	___ D/LOS			
___ TEAM C	___ M/CT			
___ TEAM D	___ M/DG			
X S/S-I (RF)	___ M/EEO			
	___ M/MO			

FROM: MARIE MORRIS (NAME)
S/S-S: SJ

A	B	C	D
21522	X 28338	28348	28062

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

1335

ACTION SLIP

UNCL
(Attachment Classification)

S/S CONTROL NUMBER
7823265

ACTION ASSIGNED TO: ARA
(Action Office Instructions on Reverse)

DATE 12/5/78

ACTION REQUESTED

___ STATE TO NSC MEMO
___ STATE TO

___ with Draft reply for signature by _____
___ with Comment or Recommendation

✓ DIRECT REPLY OK D on behalf
___ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE BY _____

___ provide info copy under cover of State-NSC transmittal form
✓ provide comeback copy for D

___ RECOMMENDATION FOR _____
___ with Memorandum for the President

___ APPROPRIATE HANDLING

___ FOR YOUR INFORMATION

DUE IN S/S BY: 12/13
CLEAR WITH: [redacted]
REMARKS/SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

___ S	___ UNA	___ A	✓ SCA	
X D	___ S/AB	___ CU	___ AF	
___ P	___ S/AR	___ EB	X ARA	
___ E	___ S/MS	___ H	___ EA	
___ T	___ S/P	___ IGA	___ EUR	
___ M	___ S/PRS	___ INR	___ NEA	
___ C	___ S/CPR	___ IO	___ ACDA	
___ S/S	___ S/IG	___ L	___ AID	
___ S/S-O	___ S/IL	___ OES	___	
___ S/S-EX	___ S/NM	___ PA	___	
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___ TEAM A	___ D/IWY			
___ TEAM B	___ D/LOS			
X TEAM C	___ M/CT			
___ TEAM D	___ M/DG			
X S/S-I (RF)	___ M/EEO			
	X M/MO			

FROM: MARIE MORRIS (NAME)
S/S-S: A 21522 B 28338 X C 28348 D 28062

[redacted]

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E B6

Honorable Warren M. Christopher
The Deputy Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 Avenue C
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Christopher:

I was talking to our mutual friend [redacted] and he suggested I write to you. I have a question which I would like you to answer for me if you can. Could you kindly tell me what legal or moral obligation the United States Government had in returning the bodies of the people who elected to leave our Country and spend their life in Guyana? Is this a privilege accorded to all U. S. citizens who die abroad or just to certain religious groups or cults? E B6

I personally find the whole situation extremely disgusting and particularly much so by our Governments in depth involvement and fantastic cost to the tax payer. If you or one of your staff would give me a reply and possibly an answer to my original question I would appreciate it.

Thank you for your cooperation in this request.

Very truly yours,

[redacted] E B6

TPT/rh